*Tells the Facts and Names the Names*

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# War Journal

The mathematics of imperial retribution for the crimes of September 11 now include somewhere near 800 dead civilians killed by the bombing of Afghganistan and here at home over 830 people of mid-east descent have been detained, mostly without charges. The campaign against Al Qaeda has turned swiftly into war against the Taliban, and as swiftly again into the familiar air war, whose prime consequence is of course the killing and maiming of civilians and the creation of vast numbers of starving refugees.

There have been the usual attempts at assassinating Taliban leaders, resulting in the apparent dispatch of Mullah Omar's ten-year old son or perhaps grandson of bin Laden, reminiscent of the killing of Qadaffi's daughter in a similar attempt to kill Libya's leader in the mid-1980s.

Some have been puzzled by the seeming contradiction between these assassination bids and the famous Executive Order 11905 (which the CIA has been whining about for years) issued in February 1976 by President Gerald Ford, to the effect that "no employee of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination". In 1989 a memo by the US Army's chief legal officer, W. Hays Park, surfaced in The Army Lawyer, product of interdepartmental meetings between the State Department, CIA and Justice Department and secretly approved by Congressional intelligence committees. It sought to clarify "the term [assassination] across the conflict spectrum" and duly did so.

According to the US Army's top legal eagle, "the clandestine, low visibility or overt use of military force against legitimate targets… where such individuals or groups pose an immediate threat to United States citizens or the national security of the United States, as determined by competent authority, does not constitute assassination… and would not be prohibited by proscription in [Ford's Executive Order] or by international law." If striking at a "known terrorist" threat involves "too great a risk" for US ground forces, it would even be "legally permissible to employ an air strike against that individual or group rather than attempt his, her or their capture".

So that's okay then. Mind you, since the BBC World Service is citing Pakistani sources as saying that this summer, long before September 11, the US was preparing attacks on the Taliban, we can imagine Mullah Omar using exactly the same language as the US Army's lawyer to justify the crashing of the passenger jet into the Pentagon. When an interviewer from al-Jazeera put this argument to Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense cited the innocent civilians killed at the Pentagon on September 11. Back in 1993 when a missile attack on Baghdad ordered by Clinton killed a number of civilians, including Iraq's best-known woman artist, a Defense Department source told journalist John Kelly (who unveiled the Pentagon's memo in CounterPunch in 1994) that "there's an assumed risk for people who work at military installations".

Justifying the mass murder of the occupants of the Trade Center towers might present greater legal obstacles, though there's no challenge too high but a properly trained government lawyer can't surmount it. Besides, Mullah Omar would probably claim, in tune with the mantra of the Pentagon and western journalists, about Afghan dead that the casualty figures of 5,000, "cannot be independently verified".

## FBI Eyes Torture

"FBI and Justice Department investigators are increasingly frustrated by the silence of jailed suspected associates of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, and some are beginning to say that traditional civil liber-

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ties may have to be cast aside if they are to extract information about the Sept. 11 attacks and terrorist plans."

Thus began a story by Walter Pincus on page 6 of the Washington Post on Sunday, October 21, and if you suspect that this is the overture to an argument for torture, you're right. The FBI interrogators have been getting nowhere with the four key suspects, held in New York's Metropolitan Correctional Center: Zacarias Moussaoui, the amazingly stupid French Moroccan arrested in August after he told instructors he wanted merely to fly commercial jetliners, the arts of take off and landing being outside his desired performance envelope; Mohammed Jaweed Azmath and Ayub Ali Khan, Indians traveling with false passports who were arrested the day after the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks with box cutters, hair dye and $5,000 in cash; and Nabil Almarabh, a former Boston cabdriver with alleged links to al-Qaeda. None of these men has talked, and Pincus quotes an FBI man involved in the interrogation as saying "it could get to that spot where we could go to pressure. . . where we won't have a choice, and we are probably getting there."

Pincus reports that "among the alternative strategies under discussion are using drugs or pressure tactics, such as those employed occasionally by Israeli interrogators, to extract information". Another idea is extraditing suspects to countries where "security services sometimes employ threats to family members or resort to torture."

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Some FBI interrogators are thinking longingly of drugs like the so-called "truth serum", sodium pentothal; others the "pressure tactics", i.e., straightforward tortures, used by Shin Bet in Israel, banned after savage public debate a few years, ago which included sensory deprivation (an old favorite of British interrogators in Northern Ireland), plus many agonizing physical torments.

Another idea is to send the suspects to other countries for torture by seasoned experts. Israel is not mentioned; nor the British. Extradition of Moussaoui to France or Morocco is apparently a possibility.

CounterPunch is astounded to find David Cole, noted liberal professor at Georgetown University Law Center being quoted by Pincus as saying "the use of force to extract information could happen" in cases where investigators believe suspects have information on an upcoming attack. "If there is a ticking bomb, it is not an easy issue, it's tough", he said. As Cole surely knows, the "ticking bomb" rationale has been used by Israel's torture lobby for years, long after it had become clear that it had simply become a routine way of dealing with suspects. Right now the disposition of the FBI, intent on interrogating every Arab American male, (some 200,000) in this country, is doubtless to assume that each might have knowledge of a ticking bomb. Should they all be tortured?

The FBI claims it is hampered by present codes of gentility. If so, there's no need to eye Morocco or France as subcontracting torturers. As a practical matter torture is far from unknown in the interrogation rooms of US law enforcement, with Abner Louima the best known recent example. There's plenty of testimony about beatings. The threat of rape or beatings by other inmates is also a familiar story. So far as rape is concerned, because of the rape factories more conventionally known as the US prison system, there are estimates that twice as many men as women are raped in the US each year.

The most infamous disclosure of consistent torture by a police department in recent years concerned cops in Chicago in the mid-70s through early 80s who used electroshock, oxygen deprivation, hanging on hooks, the bastinado, beatings of the testicles. The torturers were white and their victims black or brown. A prisoner in Pelican Bay State Prison was thrown, shackled, into boiling water. Others get 50,000-volt shocks from stun guns. Many states have so-called "secure housing units" where prisoners are kept in solitary in tiny concrete cells for years on end, many of them going mad in the process. Amnesty International has denounced US police forces for "a pattern of unchecked excessive force amounting to torture".

Since its inception the CIA has taken a keen interest in torture, avidly studying Nazi techniques and protecting their exponents such as Klaus Barbie. The FBI could ship the four Arabs to plenty of countries taught torture by CIA technicians, including El Salvador. Robert Fisk reported in the London Independent in 1998 that after the 1979 revolution Iranians found a CIA film made for the SAVAK on how to torture women.

William Blum, whose Rogue State (Common Courage, 2000) gives a useful overview of the US's relationship to torture, cites a 1970 story in Brazil's respectable Jornal do Brazil, quoting the former Uruguayan chief of police intelligence, Alejandro Otero, as saying that US advisers, particularly Dan Mitrione, had instituted torture in Uruguay on a routine basis, with scientific refinement in technique (such as the precise upper limits of electric voltage before death intervened) and psychological pressure, such as a tape in the next room of women and children screaming, telling the prisoner that his family was being tortured.

The CIA's official line is that torture is wrong and is ineffective. It is indeed wrong. On countless occasions it has been appallingly effective.

## Gee, Thanks, Jiang!

On September 11 world leaders hastened to call the White House to express condolences. The Kremlin is boasting that Putin was the first to get through, but we understand from a very good source that the Chinese leader offered the pithiest words of comfort: "If you want to use nuclear weapons in Afghanistan, we understand." Now, that's what friends are for.

## Fathers and Sons

Chances are that George W. Bush didn't need to be tutored on how to pronounce Osama bin Laden's name, after the President was informed about the events of 9/11 while reading that story about the goat to grade-schoolers in Sarasota, Florida. The bin Ladens and the Bushes go way back.

Like many ultra-rich Saudis, the bin Laden brood has always had a thing for Texas. The patriarch of the bin Laden clan, Mohammed bin Laden, the son of a Yemeni

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bricklayer who moved to Saudi Arabia and struck it rich in the construction business, flew frequently to Dallas to seal deals with his associates in the oil industry, often in his private jet.

Mohammed died in a plane crash in Saudi Arabia. One of his elder sons, Saleem, died near Houston when his ultra-light airplane hit power lines. Of all the bin Ladens, it was Saleem who had the close relationship to the Bushes. The connection was a Houston wheeler-dealer named James Bath, who haunted the darker back corridors of the Bush-Reagan years, amid the fragrance of scandals ranging from Iran/contra to BCCI to the Silverado Savings and Loan debacle to Iranian weapons mogul Adnan Khashoggi.

Bath was an Air Force fighter pilot in Vietnam who ended up in the National Guard in Houston, where he first met George W. Bush, who had fled to the Guard in order to avoid combat. Bath and Bush became fast friends, with Bush later recalling that "Bath is a lot of fun".

In the mid-1970s, Bath became vice-president of Atlantic Aviation, one of the world's top business-aircraft sales companies. At the time, Atlantic was owned by Edward DuPont, of the DuPont chemical empire. DuPont's brother, Richard, served on the board of Atlantic. According to Gerard Colby's excellent book, DuPont Dynasty, Richard's own company, Summit Aviation, was a longtime CIA contractor.

In 1976, Bath met Osama bin Laden's brother, Saleem. Saleem was entranced by planes and he and Bath hit it off almost immediately. Soon Saleem had Bath named as trustee for the bin Laden family operations and considerable investments in the United States. It was through the bin Ladens that Bath was introduced to one of their old family friends, Adnan Khashoggi. According to Robert Lacey's book, The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud, Mohammed bin Laden was a patient of Khashoggi's father, a prominent Iranian physician. The young Khashoggi became a middleman for the bin Laden conglomerate in the late 1950s, getting his start by negotiating a big truck sale that earned the Iranian $25,000.

It wasn't too long after Bath met bin Laden that he made a $50,000 investment in Arbusto Energy, a small oil company that was George W. Bush's first business venture. Arbusto means Bush in Spanish. Bath later claimed in court records that the $50,000 came from the bin Laden family.

Investigative journalist Peter Brewton asserts in his book on the Bush clan that one of Bath's former business partners, Charles White, claims that it was in this very same year of 1976 that George W. Bush, then director of Central Intelligence for the Ford Administration, recruited Bath to work for the CIA. Brewton cites White as saying one of Bath's jobs was to report on the investments of Saudi millionaires. White, by the way, was another fighter pilot and went to Annapolis with Oliver North.

Through the bin Ladens, Bath was also introduced to Sheik Khalid bin Mahfouz, the CEO of the National Commercial Bank, Saudi Arabia's biggest bank. The NC bank was a prime lender for Khashoggi. In 1985, at a time when the arms dealer was moving weapons to Afghanistan, Iran and the contras, NCB loaned Khashoggi $35 million. Bath would team with Khalid, and former Texas governor John Connally, in buying the Main Bank in Houston, an institution that helped finance the campaigns of many Texas politicians through the late 1970s and 1980s.

Khalid's banking empire would eventually extend to a stake in the Bank of Credit and Commerce Intenational, the institution that catered to crooks and spooks. Among other criminal enterprises, BCCI served as Khashoggi's chief bank for his arms deals with Iran, a depository for Oliver North's covert action funds and the conduit for CIA money bound for the Muj in Afghanistan. Khalid was indicted for fraud in 1992.

But the bin Laden group's ties to the Bushes and the elite of the US military and intelligence establishment extend far beyond the curious career of James Bath. The bin Laden construction empire has enjoyed the benefits of numerous contracts with the Pentagon, perhaps none so lucrative as those for the construction of the new airstrips and barracks following the 1996 truck bombing of the US army base in Dhahran, which killed 18 people—a bombing that many have blamed on Osama bin Laden.

The bin Laden family has also invested at least $2 million in the Carlyle Group's Partner's II Fund, which specializes in the acquisition of aerospace companies. The Carlyle Group is the DC investment house run by former Pentagon staffers, which specializes in the financing of weapons companies and security firms. The chairman of the Carlyle Group is Frank Carlucci, secretary of defense during the second Reagan administration. Its counselor is James Baker. And, despite his pledge not to trade in his presidency for a spot on corporate boards, it also employs George H.W. Bush as a senior adviser for the group's Asian Fund.

The bin Ladens' money has been zealously courted by the Carlyle Group. Baker, Bush and Carlucci have all made pilgrimages to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, headquarters of bin Ladin [sic] enterprises. Bush Sr. has met with the bin Ladens at least twice at the behest of the Carlyle Group—once in November 1998 and again in January of 2000. Baker has also courted the bin Ladens. He even flew from Washington to Saudi Arabia on the bin Laden family jet.

Carlucci's ties are even more involved, dating at least as far back to his days as chairman of Nortel Networks, the telecommunications giant, which engaged in several joint ventures with the bin Laden group.

The attention appears to have more than paid off. The Wall Street Journal, in a September 27 story, quoted an international financier with ties to bin Ladin Enterprises as saying that the family's investments in the Carlyle Group are substantially larger than $2 million, saying that the holdings in the aerospace fund were "just an initial deposit".

Until 1997, the Carlyle Group used to own a security outfit called Vinnell which, as Ken Silverstein details in his book Private Warriors, holds a contract to train the Saudi Arabian National Guard. The National Guard's primary duty is protect Saudi military bases and the nation's oil infrastructure. According to Silverstein, many of Vinnell's operatives are veterans of the CIA and the

(**War Journal** *continued on page 8)*

***Because of the rape factories known as the US prison system, there are estimates that twice as many men as women are raped in the US each year.***

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## When the 'Servants of God' Wore Red Shirts

# "Hey, Rickshaw!"

### By Peter Linebaugh

"Hey, rickshaw!" Thus in Karachi, Pakistan, back in 1959 brother Nick or I would cry out over the traffic of Elphinstone Street with its fifties Chevies, countless scooters and mopeds, swarms of bicycles, water buffalo, water wallahs, lepers, other vendors and donkey carts, for a rickshaw to carry us two six footers to the Gymkhana Club for tennis with Dad back from the Embassy and 'affairs of state,' he'd laugh. Diplomacy was not that complicated. On the one hand, John Foster Dulles' choke collar around the USSR (the SEATO alliance) needed repair since Gary Powers who had been shot down in his U-2 had taken off from Peshawar, and on the other hand, official backsheesh had to be accurately doled out with the chaste economic discourse of 'development and underdevelopment'. We smiled too 'cause we'd just discovered the Ambassador's favorite reading was Batman comic books.

Rickshaws came in two varieties. There was the bicycle rickshaw that truly provided the epitome of human oppression – the skinny hauled the fat, and there was the motor rickshaw, driven by some up-to-date rascal with his hair sleeked back with Elvis Presley-like grease. Together we'd purse our lips and trumpet out a high-speed, high-pitched sputtering noise in imitation of these motorized sharks within the traffic stream. If necessary, we'd stretch out an arm high in the sky, dangle the wrist, and spin a couple fingers, matching the tension of the desired maneuver. The kinetics of the command was recognized; akin to flagging a taxi, it was more sporting – getting the attention, prescribing the maneuver, demanding alacrity. Spinning in a fast u-turn, darting across to the other side of the street whence originated our cry - Hey, rickshaw! - revving his motor, braking to squeal his wheels - here was the acme of speed, grace, and daring.

At the time I thought it was "modernism" in the Third World, for to me human independence began with rock'n'roll. Here was none of that cringing fear or contemptible colonialist fawning, which generations of imperial sahibs had required from their dehumanized subalterns – bearers, clerks, soldiers, slaves. How did it come to pass that the man behind the rickshaw responded to traffic with such sport, verve, and daring? And not only he!

I applied to take the practical road test for my Pakistani driver's license. There were no "rules of the road" to get word perfect, nor exercises of safety, courtesy, and consideration. The test was simple and perfect in its way (if you understood that driving was a variety of virtuoso locomotion). Putting the vehicle in reverse, one was timed in driving it backwards through two tight circles of a figure eight defined by cement bollards high enough to hit the body of the car but low enough to escape view in the mirrors. To pass this test one completed the figure in the required time and without scratching the car. The Motor Vehicles department supplied an old Chevy for the purpose. Its use was not, Allah be praised, mandatory, for its dimensions were huge, and I only managed the job with a far smaller Mercedes 180. These were craftsmen, or, if you prefer, thinking of the figures of the ice-skaters, they were artists of speed.

Tamerlane and Genghis Khan were their ancestors. They are the folks who admired tent-pegging. I saw it myself when the soldier, Eisenhower, visited Karachi and the general, Ayub Khan, sat him upon the carpets under the shade of the tents to watch the lancer at full gallop lean over to the side of his steed, gripping the animal under powerful thighs, and extended almost horizontally, he lowered his lance with one arm and, with the hand of the other on his saddle horn, aim the shaft at the tent-peg eighteen inches showing and as much again hammered in the ground, lance the thing, and then in a twinkling, rotate his arm, his lance, the stuck peg, and re-ascend his seat in the saddle, urging his mount to top speed, while triumphantly holding aloft, pennants waving, lance and peg vertically high, dazzling in the blazing sun.

"Hey, rickshaw" was the compromise independent spirits made to bourgeois civilization and the traffic of the city, though such spirits had perhaps been formed under that terrific barbarism, known as the Heroic Age, which Historical Materialism tells us preceded feudalism when some crafts and all martial dexterity reached a zenith of perfection unattained ever since. Indeed, when we visited the Khyber Pass and a Pathan rifle-making forge, we sat around for ceremonial tea and biscuits whilst admiring the action of the rifle mechanisms and eyeing the truth of hand-forged barrels. To understand all this, lessons in Historical Materialism could be obtained at the Voks Library maintained by the Soviet Embassy at the corner of Elphinstone Street and, just upstairs where the forbidden forty volumes of Lenin's *Works* awaited the enquiring scholar, despite the recent proclamation of martial law.

***The sport I saw in Karachi, under the dictatorship of the military supplied by the US, was not a residual attribute from the Age of Heroes, now become a game, but a proletarian response descended from the movement of truth + power (Satyagraha).***

One did not gain these heights of learning, however, without first passing a veritable gauntlet of idle Pathans hanging out at the corner, whose lewd remarks at the sight of similar blue-eyed boys was a fright and an invitation. "Baba Sahib", they leered or jeered, laughter and obscenities accompanying the call. The insolence of such Frontiersmen was unsubdued by the mild rebukes of the traffic policeman – the pride of the mountains will not bend to the servility of the plains. They owned the corner and in their lechery let us know that these fierce people could not be conquered, though the fact that they were in Karachi, a port and proletarian city, spelled an earlier expropriation from the moun-

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tains. Later, Mother, peering up from her volume of Mary Renault, explained to her anxious boys that the Pathans were descended from the great (but bent) Alexander, and I forget who it was who sang to us what they claimed to be an authentic Pathan folk-song, "there is a boy across the river with a bottom like a peach …." Thus, as the sun set over the British empire, and the American eagle, smug and stupid, began to hold sway in Sind, espying its enemies from the vantage of the U-2, the 'Orientalist' lies of bellicosity, misogyny, and sodomy were passed upon the people who inhabit the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

At the teach-in last month at the Unversity of Toledo, relying on youthful memories and bazaar stories, I stressed that the Pathans were unbeaten through history, and in doing so, like countless others since Kipling or E.M. Forster, a tremulo entered my voice, stemming from militarist admiration for survivors of the Heroic Age. Despite budget cut-backs our library has a copy of the wonderful work of oral history conducted by Mukulika Banerjee. It shows that the so-called warlike, woman-hating, boy-loving descendants of Alexander, Tamerlane, &c., had led a spirited campaign of popular education and non-violent resistance to the British Empire during the 1930s and '40s. Calm and steadfast from frequent drill, the emphasis was on self-reform, grace, and discipline. They defied cavalry on parade or in streets by lying down in the path of advancing horsemen. Walk, canter, or charge, the horse, if not the rider, is unnerved. "We asked for our freedom with folded hands", said one. "It was a war of patience", said another. As for jail, "we used to go in illiterate but came out of them educated." *"Inshallah"* was the greeting of underdevelopment's fatalism we were taught, not knowing its spiritual context of struggle, for did not these anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist revolutionaries swear to conform to God's will? The oath of induction, solemnized on the *Qur'an* included non-violence, refusal of revenge, non-cooperation to the British, and service to the people.

The boycott of Government courts, the witholding of taxes and rent, the restoration of village councils, and the picketing of liquor stores formed the action of non-cooperation. The authorities responded with massacre at the Kissa Khani ('the Storytellers') bazaar in Peshawar on 23 April 1930 when two hundred were killed. The troops withdrew leaving the city in the hands of the Red Shirts for four days. The non-violent resistance of the Muslim Pathans made them nationalist, non-sectarian, heroes overnight.

The leader of this movement was Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He had made the *haj* and was well versed in the *Qur'an*. He urged unity among the villages; he showed that factionalism and feuding were functional to the foreigner. Although the mullahs and the khans were in the pay of the British, he activated the mosque and the village council as locations for discussion. This non-violent movement was called the *Khudai Khidmatgar* or 'Servants of God.' He said the land was ours, we should be united, and wear red clothes. Our children had no shoes. 'They get the butter and we get the whey.' Ghaffar Khan explained that no vehicle could move without two wheels. Therefore the women also must be involved and break *purdah*. *Khudai Khidmatgar* protected women's inheritance rights. He addressed them as 'mothers and sisters.' They formed their own marching units. The Chief Secretary of the Raj reported in 1931 an "increase in the active participation of women".

***The oath of induction, solemnized on the Qur'an, included non-violence, refusal of revenge, non-cooperation to the British, and service to the people.***

The so-called ideology of barbarism (*pukhtunwali*) – the code of honor, the condition of integrity, the duty of hospitality, the obligation of sanctuary, was based on the egalitarian system of land redistribution, the *wesh*, which Mountstuart Elphinstone described in his 1815 treatise. The *Khudai Khidmatgar* transformed this code into a powerful spiritual and politcial force, a nonviolent liberation movement. When viewed against British privatization, the mass jailings, the brutal *lathi* (a cross between a stick and a club) charges, the tortures, forced labor, concentration camps, the public humiliations, and the repeated massacres, the *pukhtunwali* of the Pathans looks more and more like civilization. The stereotypes arose to stigmatize the unsurrendered: the so-called bellicosity describes the victors of three Afghan wars; according to Ronald Hyam's *Empire and Sexuality*, the misogyny originated with the Imperialist armies starting with the wholesale rape of Kabul women in 1841; the so-called sodomy arose as a defense mechanism stemming from British tortures, tent pegging of the anuses of suspected Red Shirts. As for honor, integrity, hospitality, sanctuary, equality, one does not seek it from petroleum dynasties - Bush.

It was 'an experiment in truth,' as Ghaffar Khan's close friend and ally, Gandhi said. These Servants of God rejected partition and the Muslim state and consequently their works and days have been obliterated by the 'modernizing' military and mullahs of Pakistan. Hence, on returning to college in the U.S.in 1961 when I learned non-violent resistance in preparing to integrate the Jim Crow roller-rink in Chester, Pa., I thought it was a new thing invented by M.L. King, Jr., who explained *agape* as restored justice and created community. Had I known better, surely, as I clammered quickly up the outside steps to the Voks library off Elphinstone Street casting about a last time at the Pathans on the corner, my ears might have heard not only sexual harrassments but anti-imperialist slogans, and my eyes might have seen the faded red shirt of a veteran of the *Khudai Khidmatgar*. The sport I saw in Karachi, under the dictatorship of the military supplied by the U.S.A., was not a residual attribute from the Age of Heroes, now become a game, but a proletarian response descended from the movement of truth + power (Satyagraha).

Mukulika Banerjee concludes her book, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North West Frontier* (Oxford University Press: Karachi & New Delhi, 2000), by saying that the past is threefold, viz., it is experienced, it is discovered, and it is mythologized, and to these we must add a fourth, it is unfinished, and its lessons, patiently and forgivingly, await her pupils. Hey, rickshaw! Hey, comrade! CP

**Peter Linebaugh's** most recent book is the Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic.

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## *Are We Feeding Afghans, Muslims or the US Public?*

# Sticks and Carrots

### By Aisha Ikramuddin

Within two days of the US food drops, concerns began to trickle in from international aid agencies and non-governmental relief organizations. They pointed out the obvious: the US relief effort is largely symbolic. Oxfam and Doctors without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres, or MSF) went the furthest in their protestations. They condemned the air deliveries as ineffective, costly and woefully inadequate to feed more than five million starving Afghanis. Airdrops are the most expensive means of getting food to the hungry—kilo for kilo, twelve times the cost of overland deliveries. Oxfam says 10 times as much food could be trucked in daily if the bombing was stopped.

***The Pentagon has even posted pictures online of Santa's Little Helpers constructing the high-tech Tri-Wall Air Delivery System: cardboard boxes, some string, and plywood.***

By week's end, images of the yellow packets strewn across a rugged land began to emerge. *The New York Times* printed a heart-warming story of the reactions of recipients in the stronghold of the Northern Alliance, the faction that enjoys, at least to some degree, Western favor. The BBC aired footage of Northern Alliance soldiers bagging the packets and hauling them away, possibly to fortify the militia, and scenes of packets hawked in markets.

No one really knows what's happening with "humanitarian daily rations" (HDRs) in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. There are reports, possibly propaganda, from refugees streaming across the Pakistani border that Afghanis near Kabul are piling up the packets and setting 'em on fire (perhaps with a match included with the food rations). Others say that the reaction to the food drops is anger. Some believe that Afghanis would view the packages with suspicion, having no idea what's inside them. Bombs? Pork-tainted vittles? Or biological agents?

These speculations, of course, suppose that the Afghanis don't get killed while going after the packets of food. The food packets are dropped from high altitudes—and despite claims that they "flutter" to the ground—might pack quite a punch if they hit anyone. It's not like it hasn't happened before. In the early 1990s, falling food killed a dozen Kurdish refugees in Iraq. In the Sudan, after wriggling loose from the bundle, airborne water bottles became missiles. But of even greater concern: Afghanis may have to dodge Soviet mines, which number into the ten millions, to retrieve the packets. As it is, mines injure or kill about 80 people every month in Afghanistan.

Then there's the distinct possibility that the food will get into "wrong hands", like the Taliban or black-market profiteers. "Drop zones tend to turn into new places of conflict as people fight over the *mannah*," says Nabil al-Tikriti, who has served on relief missions in Iraq and the Sudan. Whoever gets to the drops first gets richer. Here, that may simply mean that the Taliban just got a funding increase from the air."

## Who's it all for?

President Bush and Defense officials say that American aid is meant to assure the Afghani people that America is not at war with them. MSF, however, has dubbed the effort a "military propaganda operation", stating that it was really "…designed to gather international approval of the attacks". The media pundits claim that the food campaign is really for the consumption of Arab and Muslim populations. *Time* magazine's Washington bureau chief Michael Duffy told the viewers of *Good Morning America*, "I think what the administration hopes is that Arabs in other countries like Jordan and Egypt will get a sense of the American humanitarian effort so that the coalition stays strong".

If that's the case, it isn't working. Effigies of W. and American flags still blaze in Pakistan and Indonesia. Anti-American demonstrations have also erupted in Egypt, Turkey, Nigeria, Iran, Jordan, Bangladesh and India. Palestinians killed Palestinians to quell anti-American dissent. Muslim foreign ministers at an emergency meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference rejected "targeting any Islamic or Arab state under the pretext of fighting terrorism". Wahhabi religious clerics in Saudi Arabia issued a *fatwa*, branding infidel-supporters as infidels and invoking the J word against anyone who dared to support the bombings of Afghanistan.

In an attempt to further win over Muslim sentiment, President Bush appealed to the kids of America, asking them to fork over a dollar to aid the children of Afghanistan. This way, we get the whole country involved.

This is not the first time we've engaged in symbolic relief efforts, designed to subvert humanitarian aid to political ends. In 1954, the Eisenhower administration, along with the ever opportunistic Hubert Humphrey, created Food for Peace, our first food aid program. Through FFP, the United States provides food donations for disaster and famine relief, but also ties food exports to economic and community development programs. Politics inevitably plays into who receives and who does not. For example, the Contras and the Salvadoran army have been beneficiaries. In fact, a starving Ethopia received less than El Salvador at one point.

We've also poured billions of dollars of aid monies, channeled through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), into South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The campaign to win over the "hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese, in fact, was, at the time, the largest humanitarian effort ever conducted by the US government. In 1967, for example, USAID allocated more than one-quarter of its worldwide budget to Vietnamese projects. The same year, much of USAID's work was melded into a new military- and CIA-dominated creation, Civil Operations and Rural Development Support Program (CORDS). Under CORDS, USAID staff joined American and South Vietnamese military and CIA personnel to set up programs to lure Vietnamese

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***The real winners of humanitarian aid efforts could very well be good old American corporations and politicians.***

peasants to the South Vietnamese government's cause and to destroy support for the National Liberation Front.

Last year, the Congress appropriated $12 million for humanitarian relief for Iraqis to be distributed through the Iraqi National Congress, or INC, the main umbrella group for opposition forces arrayed against Saddam Hussein's government. An additional $6 million was budgeted for INC propaganda inside Iraq. Did Congress really think that was enough to topple Saddam?

## Made for America?

Truth be told, we're the group most likely to be won over by the heart-tugging efforts of our armed services delivering food like Santa and his elves, in a war zone no less. The Department of Defense has even posted pictures online of Santa's Little Helpers, about 66 service men, constructing the high-tech Tri-Wall Air Delivery System (cardboard boxes, some string, plywood) and loading them with the goodies. Some of the shots include 3-D simulations of the airdrops. MSNBC posted video footage of the drops obtained from the Department of Defense. The visual technology is obviously there to impress us, not Afghanis who rely on radio for their news bites.

Most Americans would not have known that, before 9-11, the United States was the largest individual country donor of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan ($173 million, including the $43 million gift in the form of humanitarian assistance that W. awarded earlier this year to the Taliban for their anti-opium activities). But those funds were pledged months ago. Better yet to increase the booty to $320 million while all faces are glued to their television screens and launch a very visible campaign that is difficult to criticize. Even with nagging doubts, you're apt to say, "It's better than nothing, right?"

These days, American foreign aid is so dismally miniscule that it is symbolic in just about all cases. In 1949, just two years after the Marshall Plan was initiated, the United States spent 3.49 percent of the GDP on making the world a better place, luring hearts and minds and tummies to the American way. Today, foreign aid makes up less than one percent of our GDP, or a mere $15 billion. That's the same as the bailout the airline industry won for their lobbying efforts and less than a third of the $54 million Mayor Rudy sought in aid to rebuild New York City. About half of that $15 billion goes to military assistance, training and "security aid," such as anti-narcotics, anti-terrorism and non-proliferation efforts. It wasn't until the end of the Cold War, though, that we got stingy, since hearts and minds and tummies had nowhere else to go. Now the wealthiest country in the world places dead last among 22 industrial nations for its foreign aid commitment. Despite invocations of "nation-building" and "Marshall Plan" for Afghanistan, the current Foreign Aid budget request, currently on debate on the hill, remains a pathetic $15 billion. But the Defense Budget for FY2002 rose 11 percent from last year to $343 billion.

In many cases, the pittances that we do spend for humanitarian efforts allow us to continue to don the "do-gooder" cap while avoiding the pain and pitfalls of involvement in foreign conflicts. Such has been the case in Bosnia, Congo, the Sudan, and of course Afghanistan. While promoting the UN "oil-for-food" program to allow Iraq to purchase much needed basic goods, the US has continued to support economic sanctions against Iraq. The primary impact of sanctions has been the un-developing of that nation—Iraq's rank on the human development index dropped from 55 out of 130 countries in 1990 to 125 in 1999. The result of "oil-for-food" has been the politicization of the humanitarian aid effort in Iraq. The US and Britain frequently block shipments from entering Iraq, citing that the contained goods could be used for purposes other than humanitarian.

But the real winners of humanitarian aid efforts could very well be good 'ole American interests. It turns out that AmeriQual, one of three companies contracted by DoD to produce HDRs and MREs (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) is chaired by Steven Chancellor, who also happens to be the CEO of Black Beauty Coal, the largest coal mining company in Indiana. Through Black Beauty, Chancellor gave a half million dollars to federal candidates during the 1999-2000 election cycle, making the company the second biggest donor in Indiana, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. More than $300,000 of this was offered in soft money contributions after Dick Cheney was chosen to run with Bush, making Black Beauty a top energy donor to the Republic National Committee. As a result, Chancellor, a golf buddy of General Norman Schwarzkopf and Dan Quayle, also won the dubious distinction of serving with 473 other big ticket "advisors" on Bush's transition team. Black Beauty was awarded $90 million in defense contracts in 2000—double the year before—placing it among the top ten federal contractors in Indiana.

Agribusiness also benefits. Most food aid is channeled either through FFP/USAID or Section 416(b) of the Agriculture Act of 1949, which enables the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to buy up surplus food crops, for both price and food security reasons, and see to its distribution. Both are unabashed means of promoting food exports and preventing surpluses from causing prices to drop. In other words, they're federal assistance for American agribusiness giants, such as Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland. Of the $173 million given to Afghanistan recently, $100 million came from 416(b) wheat surpluses purchased by USDA and $28 million went to commodity purchases by FFP/USAID.

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(**Journal** continued from page 3)
US Army's Special Forces. Vinnell's roots can be traced to Vietnam, where it did some of the nastier work for the Pentagon and earned the nickname "our little mercenary force". During the Gulf War, Vinnell operatives basically led Saudi units. Today Saudi Arabia remains one of Vinnell's top clients. The company maintains more than 1,000 employees in the country, many of them working full time to protect Saudi assets against attacks from homegrown militants, such as Osama bin Laden and his followers.

## The Sultan's Lair

found to lie with the other driver, assuming which they rash enough to file a complaint. As for Rumsfeld "lingering", CounterPunch assumes that the Secretary of Defense was merely prating away in his habitual conceited fashion, but presented no physical allure to the Sultan, and thus the Secretary was not called upon to make unusual sacrifices in the interests of the great anti-terror Coalition.

## Meet Clifford Hutchins

"Westerners fight face to face, in stand-up battle, and go on until one side or the other gives in. They choose the crudest weapons available, and use them with appalling violence, but observe what, to non-Westerners may well seem curious rules of honor. Orientals, by contrast, shrink from pitched battle, which they often deride as a sort of game, preferring ambush, surprise, treachery and deceit as the best way to overcome an enemy." This was Britain's leading military pundit, Sir John Keegan, writing in the Daily Telegraph. Time was, during the American revolution , that Keegan's predecessors were reviling the Yankee Minutemen for similarly devious tactics of ambush and retreat.

Christopher Hitchens is now declaring in an interview in the libertarian journal Reason that he's not a socialist. He turns out to have been a closet Thatcherite all along. "With the very slight exception of myself", Hitchens tells Reason, almost nobody had perceived Margaret Thatcher's radicalism. Hitchens, the sworn foe of Mother Teresa, praises Mrs. T's "intellectual and moral courage" in marshaling the "revolutionary, radical forces in British life".

In contrast to his paeans to Thatcher, Hitchens derides the anti-WTO movement for alleged archaism as opposed to what he regards as the pleasing prospect of globalization. Then he haughtily confides to Reason that "the sad thing is that practically everything I've just said wouldn't even be understood by most of the people who attend the current protests, because they wouldn't get the references." Glancing through that portion of the interview we find the following recondite allusions: Promethean, Port Huron statement, SDS, Marx, East Timor, Henry Kissinger, Chile, David Rockefeller, Trilateral Commission, John Birch Society. Doesn't sound too arduous an intellectual framework to us.

***Hitchens praises Mrs Thatcher's"intellectual and moral courage" in marshaling the "revolutionary, radical forces in British life."***

In the course of a whirlwind jaunt around the Middle East in early October Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Sultan Qaboos in Oman. The Washington Post mentioned a Rumsfeld excursion to the desert, where he "lingered" with the Sultan in the latter's "incense-laden tent". This may well have been a delicate allusion to the fact that the Sultan is known among the cognoscenti as the Queen of Oman. Particularly since the death of his mother the Arab potentate has given full rein to his preference, creating in the process severe traffic risks in his realm since he likes to give his teenage amours expensive sports cars in which they roar around town. Since their feet can barely reach the brake pedal, accidents are frequent and of course fault is invariably

On the other hand CounterPunch co-editor Cockburn spoke at a peace rally in San Francisco in early October where he made passing reference to Hitchens' dishonest attacks on Chomsky. Later a 21-year old at the rally asked her seasoned radical dad exactly who this "Clifford Hutchins" was, and why Cockburn was bothering with him. Puts it all in proportion really. CP

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## *Jiang to Bush: "Nuke 'em"*

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